

# Letter from Taizé

Bimonthly 3.50 FF

4

August - September 1996

PROCESSED

AUG 05 1996

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## A Wider Church Life

For several months

now, many people in Stuttgart have been looking forward to the European meeting and beginning to prepare for it.

In early May, some preliminary meetings were held to give information, and already representatives of over 180 parishes expressed their willingness to set up a preparation team in their local community. These teams of varied sizes will share information and look for families and places of accommodation. They will also think about how to organize the mornings which participants spend in the parishes during the European meeting.

From the start, Catholic and Lutheran church leaders told of their joy at hosting the European meeting this year. During the meeting, a priest in charge of a sector of the city already expressed his grati-

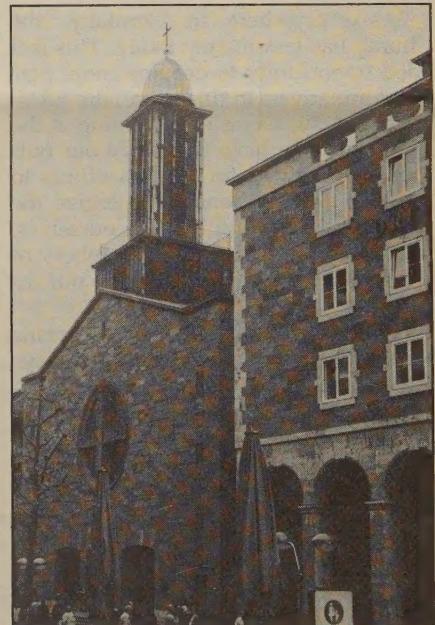
tude in advance: "Today we need signs, and we have to know how to be open to them. Usually, when we need something we go and buy it; but that is not possible with signs! I think that we are going to be enriched in three ways: we need to be in contact with people who live in other situations and who will help us to rediscover the meaning of the simple values of life. We are going to learn what hospitality means, opening our doors to discover something new in our lives. And finally, we shall have the experience of a wider Church life, on a worldwide scale, and realize that the Church is not only what we see under our own bell-tower."

### **Giving the Church a More Welcoming Appearance**

People are already working hard to give the Church a more welcoming appearance, one closer to the needs of today. You are made aware of that effort when you visit the different churches in the centre of Stuttgart: in the principal Lutheran church, the Stiftskirche, every day at noon a Bible meditation is offered; in the central Catholic church, St. Eberhard, near the train station, religious sisters ensure a personal welcome for all who wish it; in another church, all winter long meals are served for a nominal sum to anyone who comes.



*People are already working hard to give the Church a more welcoming appearance, one closer to the needs of today. In the centre of Stuttgart: the main Lutheran parish, the Stiftskirche (left), and the central Catholic Church, St Eberhard.*



Another characteristic of Stuttgart is the strong presence of foreign communities. In some districts, as much as 30% of the population are foreigners. Representatives of the Italian and Spanish communities were already present at the first preparatory meetings, and it was clear that there is a strong desire to work together.

### **Renewing Parish Life**

In Stuttgart as elsewhere, many are interested in renewing parish life. In May 1993, three hundred persons from different groups working for such a renewal came together for three days to try and understand in depth what the others were looking for. Instead of working along parallel lines, each on their own, they discovered a common desire to act in solidarity with one another. More and more parishes want to enter into a plan of renewal that is aimed not only at deepening the life of faith, but also at transforming the way the parishes work, for example by setting up small neighbourhood communities.

Those who have begun preparing the European meeting in their local situation have already shared some news and expressed some desires:

"In our sector, many priests will not be replaced when they leave. That creates tensions and causes people to worry. At the same time, in a new district where no parish was planned, a retired man bought a shop. With the help of others, he turned it into a chapel and group meetings began. Around this place of prayer and meeting a true community was formed and now a priest has been sent there, partially supported financially by the residents.

"As everywhere in Germany, the Church has less money today. This is a good opportunity to develop more personal initiatives. In this sense, the European meeting seems to be coming at the right time. We have to change our outlook: not waiting for Church offices to send us a professional to energize the parish, but realizing that we ourselves, young and old, including members of parish councils, have to develop our intuitions.

"This change of perspectives means breaking out of our routines, not lamenting over what no longer exists, and recognizing that something can evolve, even now when structures no longer work in the same way as they used to. For example, we proposed to our Protestant and Catholic parishes to celebrate together, for the first time, a way of Emmaus on Easter Monday. We thought that only a few people would show up, given how few people generally come to

church the day after Easter. We were surprised to see some two hundred people arrive, from the elderly with their canes to babies in their prams. We want to look beyond our garden walls and dare to do something together. The preparation for the European meeting will give us the opportunity."

### **Much Depends on Personal Initiatives**

"For us, the meeting will be a breath of fresh air and will give people confidence in themselves. This is essential now when parish life will depend to a much greater extent on the initiatives of each person. When people see that it was possible to organize such a meeting in a few months and to welcome 300 young foreigners in our parish, then they will have the courage to become involved in other aspects of parish life. So much energy is used up discussing financial questions and practical repairs and improvements! We need to rediscover the heart of our faith, and make the parish more welcoming."

"An important topic of discussion currently is Europe and the economic situation. With the presence of young people from all countries in Stuttgart, the beautiful side of Europe will become visible, and the discussion will not be limited to economic questions. In Germany many are afraid, because competition from Eastern Europe is becoming more intense. It is becoming cheaper to produce things elsewhere, despite the state-of-the-art technology present in Baden Württemberg. When our families offer hospitality to young people from Eastern Europe, they will better understand how people in those countries live. That can help them to see Europe as a whole, as a community of persons with the same roots and common values and not just as a kind of economic competition. Personally, when I see co-workers tormented by the fear of being unemployed from one day to the next, I remember words I heard years ago in Poland: 'We have learned to attach our hearts to realities that cannot be taken away from us.'"

### **Courage and Clarity to Continue the Journey**

Some young adults from Trier, in Germany, explain why they feel it is important for the German Church to host the European meeting in Stuttgart:

"For some time now the German Church has been asking lots of questions about its future. Some think that tradi-

tional structures should be changed and a theology developed that is closer to the people and more oriented to the Gospel's message of liberation. There is much discussion about the role of the laity in the Church, the role of women and we are looking for ways of finding a place for those who feel left out, so that they can take part in the life of the Church. How can the Church be made welcoming and accessible to all?

"Conversations between laity and clergy are a great help in shedding light on the present discontent. Everyone agrees that it is urgent to react. Debates that have at times been quite passionate have, on the other hand, deepened the tensions in the Church in Germany. There are wounds felt by lay people who want to be accepted as equal partners and who sometimes feel held back in their commitment by a hierarchy that seems complex to them. On the part of the clergy there is the feeling that most people are indifferent, or even mistrustful, regarding the Church and its representatives. Both sides share a deep anxiety at the realization that Christian values are disappearing more and more in our present-day society. In short, we are aware of a great unease, but we do not know what road to take in order to build a Church that is alive and close to people.

"It could seem that what is missing in these reflections and discussions, at times quite animated, is the awareness that we are 'God's people on the move'. 'On the road with Jesus Christ' was the theme of a large pilgrimage held this year in our city. We should realize that we are not alone in our difficult search for the way forward. And the Church is also God's Church! On the one hand, that means we need to focus more on what unites us (faith in the Risen Christ); we are working for the future together. On the other hand, it would be good if we could trust more in God's activity. We are not the only ones in charge of the future of Christianity—the future of the Church is also God's work.

"We are looking too much for the 'ideal system' for the German Church, thinking that, once structures are changed, the Church will be perfect. For us Christians in Germany, it is essential to rediscover the importance of abandoning ourselves to God. During the European meeting, it will do us good to feel united as 'God's people on the move' in the simplicity of a prayer with others and in the joy of a shared experience of communion. Rediscovering prayer in communion with so many young people from different nations will open up a way for the future. Sharing our experiences with others will give us courage and clarity to continue the journey."

At the end of this year, tens of thousands of young adults from all the countries of Europe will be welcomed in Germany, in the town of Stuttgart. A new stage in the "pilgrimage of trust on earth," it will be the nineteenth European meeting prepared by Taizé.

Taking part in the European meeting means preparing oneself to foster reconciliation on all levels, in the human family as well as in the midst of those around us in our daily life. The welcome in families and parishes helps us to discover, in a tangible way, that peace and trust are possible among people who are very different.

**The common prayers, the times of group reflection** root the search for the meaning of life in a communion in God. Meeting witnesses to a commitment on behalf of others, in parishes and neighbourhoods, helps us to take on responsibilities in our own situation.

**F**or the European meeting to go well, each participant must take part in all that is proposed. An attitude of attention and openness to others, especially from other countries, is vital. The time of preparation should provide a foretaste of the meeting itself, so that those who register know what they are committing themselves to, so that they can consciously decide to take part in all the prayers and meetings. The preparation takes place on a regional basis through meetings and prayers which will be organized from September on.

### **The following questions can help this preparation:**

What motivates me to set out towards other Christians who are far away? Am I ready to take a similar step towards those who are nearby?

Who can I set out with? Who do I know around me who would be happy to take part in this stage of the "pilgrimage of trust," in this experience of discovering the meaning of the Church and of being open to others? How can I propose it to other people beyond my circle of friends and acquaintances?

Can I take a time of silence now and then to review my life, to pray simply while listening to God, and to see what consequences the "pilgrimage of trust" has in my daily life?

The pilgrimage to Stuttgart calls for an inner attitude of openness, of attentiveness to others. How can I begin by opening myself to those who need me here and now?

The starting-point of the pilgrimage is the local community. How can I look for ways, from the very beginning of the preparation, of maintaining and deepening links with different groups and local Christian communities?

You can now contact us by e-mail:  
[community@taize.fr](mailto:community@taize.fr) or for information concerning the welcome of visitors,  
[meetings@taize.fr](mailto:meetings@taize.fr)

#### **Practical Details**

**Date:** Arrive Saturday morning, 28th December 1996 between 7am and 12 noon. Depart Wednesday afternoon, 1st January 1997.

**General programme:** Participants will be welcomed by families and local church communities throughout the city. Morning prayer each day will be in one of the local churches of the neighbourhood where you are staying. Then meetings in small groups with other participants and with local people. Each day — midday and evening — there will be two common prayers for all participants of the meeting together. In the afternoon, workshops on various themes.

**Accommodation:** Simple conditions — with families, in schools and in church halls. Bring sleeping-bag and lightweight mattress.

#### **17 to 29 year olds:**

— those who can help, as animators in parishes or as team-leaders for practical tasks, or in the choir group, need to arrive on Thursday 26th December, between 8am and 3pm. (Arrival not possible on 27th December.)

— those who arrive on 28th December choose one of three ways of taking part:

participation in the life of parishes of the city (this is the main group) the silence group (has its own separate accommodation)

while still participating in the life of a parish, helping in a team that has a practical responsibility (meal distribution, church team, choir group). It is still possible to join such a group on 28th December.

**16 year olds** may come to the meeting only if accompanied by an adult over 18, with each adult accompanying no more than four 16 year olds. Arrival: 28th December — not before. All take part in the main group during the meeting: "participation in the life of parishes of the city".

**Adults over 30:** the European Meeting is intended for young adults under 30, however a few adults over this age can also come, in particular if they are leading groups of young adults. We ask older adults (over 45) to consider sponsoring a young person to come from a church, chaplaincy or school in their area, instead of coming themselves. Adults over 30 all participate in the main group, and arrive on 28th December (not before). Those who cannot accept the same simple accommodation conditions as the young people

and who need a "real bed" should indicate this on their registration form.

**Families with children, and people with a disability** who need special accommodation should contact Taizé — best by telephone in October or November — to arrange this.

**The contribution to costs** expected from each participant can only be given exactly in the autumn. For young people under 30 from Britain, it will be in the region of £45 for the whole meeting; more for adults. As well as the hire of meeting-halls and equipment, this covers all meals and a public transport pass.

**Send in your registration form by 1st December** at the latest. Further information will be sent in November to those who register earlier. Send the form to Taizé either directly or through the person leading your group.

#### **Travel:**

— from Britain: for special coaches to the meeting contact "Skyliners", Flaval House, Caldwell Road, NEATON, CV11 4NB. Tel: (01203) 325682 / 328410 Fax: (01203) 354626

— from other countries: write to Taizé for information.

## **REGISTRATION FORM**

Send before 1st December to:

■ "European Meeting", Taizé Community, 71250 TAIZÉ, France. Tel: (+33) 85.50.30.02 (9-11 am and 3.30-5.30 pm); Fax: (+33) 85.50.30.16.

**First Name**

**Family Name**

**Address**

**County or City & State**

**Post code**

**Telephone :** .....

**Occupation :** ..... **Age:** .....

(Circle "Yes" or "No" or complete where necessary)

I'm coming alone / with a group from the town of.....

led by .....

For adults (over 30 years) and those who cannot sleep on the floor: I need a

bed: yes / no if "yes", say whether you are (please circle): woman man couple family with ..... children disabled person

helper of disabled person

I will arrive on 28th December: yes / no (arrival time between 7am and 12 noon)

I will arrive on 26th December (17-30 year olds only): yes / no

to help with (please circle): animation / work teams / music team.

**N.B.** If for any reason you are arranging your own accommodation, please send us the address where you will be staying.

**W**hat does it mean to be a Christian? To live according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or to belong to his Church? It is not rare today to encounter a tendency to separate these two dimensions. On the one hand the Church, an "institution" with its structures, its doctrines, its ministers. On the other, the life led by all who root their existence in the Gospel message and try to live it out in their own situation. Are not Christian life

men in the boat, they went off and followed him" (Mark 1,19-20). This radical response, eminently personal, leads to the creation of a community. After the death and resurrection of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, this community will continue "until the very ends of the earth" (Acts 1,8) the mission that was Jesus's. In the New Testament there is no separation, still less any contradiction, between the personal choice to follow Christ and the existence of the community of be-

body which is the Church" (Col 1,18). For those who become members of Christ, personal identity and belonging to the community of believers are henceforth two aspects of one and the same reality.

In addition, a personal life cannot be a merely passive condition with no interiority. An essential characteristic of this new identity is its fruitfulness: if it is real, it will bear fruit in daily life. The way Christ lived has to "take flesh" in the community life of his disciples.

## *The Personal Roots of the Church*

### **Colossians 3,9b-17**

and membership in the Church often viewed as two distinct realities, linked at most by external or optional connections? Such a separation, foreign to the sources of faith, keeps us from entering fully into what Saint Paul's Letter to the Colossians calls "the mystery" (Col 1,26; cf. Eph 3,3), in other words God's overarching plan for the universe which he has created.

The word "institution" applied to the Church risks leading us astray right from the start. Insofar as it is a collectivity of persons structured by shared rules and customs, the Christian Church can be referred to as an institution, in the same way as an educational or judicial system or other similar organizations. But this sociological use of the word is not very helpful for understanding the essence of the Church. In theology, the word "institution" has quite a different significance: it means that the existence of the Church does not depend merely on a human decision. The Church is different from other groupings of persons because it was instituted, in other words founded, by a divine act, by the will of Jesus Christ himself (cf. Mark 3,13), as an integral part of his designs of love.

But how did Christ found the Church? By calling men and women to follow him, as we read in the beginning of the Gospel. "Jesus saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John, who were in their boat fixing their nets. At once he called them. And leaving their father Zebedee with his hired

believers called the Church.

Writing to the Colossians (Col 3,9b-17), Saint Paul allows us to grasp the same dynamics in the life of the early Christians. He compares baptism to changing clothes: by welcoming Christ through the "yes" of faith (cf. 1,23; 2,6), the baptized person takes off "the old human being" and puts on "the new one" (3,9-10). We have to remember that, in the ancient world, the clothing one wore had a meaning: it was a clear indication of one's personal identity—one's social class, race, sex, etc. Now, writes Saint Paul to those who have been baptized, you have received a new identity, by means of which you are becoming more and more what you already are in the eyes of the God who created you in his image (cf. Gen 1,26).

This new personal identity is not merely individual. It is that of a being-in-communion, someone who does not find their identity in isolation, but with and through others; such a person lives through a constant process of sharing with those around them. "The new man" is in fact "the new humanity," where "there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcized and uncircumcized, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free, but Christ: he is all and in all" (3,11).

In other words, through baptism, believers put on another mode of existence. They are clothed in Christ, not Christ as an individual but Christ as a being of communion, the source of universal reconciliation, "Head of the

compassion, humility, patience, forgiveness...all different facets of the love that makes community possible (3,12-15). In short, believers must communicate to those around them what they have received. By sharing it with their brothers and sisters, it is as if they gave it back to God: their life becomes a hymn of thanksgiving (3,15.17; cf. 1,3).

In verse 16, Saint Paul gives a concrete example that shows this process at work. He exhorts the faithful to let "Christ's Word dwell within [them] in all its richness." Then he explains how this Word takes concrete shape in the life of the community: among other things, by mutual instruction and liturgical song. And so, when Christians communicate the Gospel or pray to the Lord, it is as if, through their mouths Christ were still speaking. In the perspective of this letter, strictly speaking there is no separation between the gift given by Christ and the activity of those who have received the gift: just as the apostle prolongs in his own existence the sufferings of Christ for his body which is the Church (1,24), in the same way, when Christians use their gifts to serve others, it is Christ himself who builds up his Body by making use of their active collaboration. The personal faith journey of each believer and the existence of the Church are in the final analysis two aspects of the same mystery, the mystery of the "Christ of communion": there is only Christ, who is all and in all (3,11b).

# MEDITATING ON THE WORD

## SEPTEMBER

These short readings proposed for reflection are taken from the midday prayer in Taizé. The reference shows where the text was taken from. Sometimes a longer reading is given, for those who wish to set the text in its context.

## JOHANNINE HOURS

LUKE 9,24

Ep 1:15-23

**1 SUN** May God enlighten the eyes of your heart so that you may see the hope to which he calls you.

Is 45:1-7

**2 Mon** God says: I will go before you and will level the mountains so that you may know that I am the Lord, the one who calls you by name.

Rm 8:14-17

**3 Tue** Paul writes: You did not receive a spirit which makes you a slave to fear again; you received the spirit of sonship by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"

Is 42:1-7

**4 Wed** The Lord says to his servant: I have called you in righteousness. I will take you by the hand and shape you. I will make you a light to the nations.

Rm 12:3-13

**5 Thu** Be joyful in your hope, steadfast in hardship, faithful in prayer. Be always ready to offer hospitality.

Ps 55:17-19

**6 Fri** To God I call and he saves me, evening, morning and at noon. God's peace delivers my soul, for he hears my cry.

Jn 6:28-35

**7 Sat** Jesus said: I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

Rm 13:8-10

**8 SUN** All the commandments can be summed up in this: Love your neighbour as yourself.

Ps 105:1-5

**9 Mon** Seek God and his strength, seek his face at all times. Remember the wonders God has done.

1 Tm 4:7-16

**10 Tue** St. Paul writes: Train yourself to live in godliness: it holds out promise both for the present life and the life to come.

Jr 20:7-9

**11 Wed** Jeremiah said: The word of the Lord has brought insult and derision upon me. And so I said to myself, "I shall not think about him, I shall no longer speak in his name." But there seemed to be a burning fire in my heart, which I could not contain.

Rm 15:1-7,13

**12 Thu** St. Paul writes: We should not try to please ourselves, but consider what is good for our neighbours and so build up community.

Col 1:9-14

**13 Fri** God has rescued us from the rule of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have forgiveness.

Mt 6:25-34

**14 Sat** Jesus said: Seek first God's kingdom and his justice, and all the other things will be given you in addition.

Si 27:30-28:7

**15 SUN** Forgive your neighbour any wrongs. For if someone nurses anger against another, how can they then ask for healing from God?

Jn 12:1-5

**16 Mon** The Lord said to Abraham, "Leave your country, your kinsfolk and your father's house for the land I will show you." And Abraham set out, as the Lord had told him.

2 Co 9:6-11

**17 Tue** Paul writes: Anyone who sows generously will also reap generously. And God is able to enrich you with every grace so that, having all you need, your resources overflow in all kinds of good work.

Lk 12:33-34

**18 Wed** Jesus said: Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

2 Co 1:18-24

**19 Thu** Paul explained his ministry, saying: We do not want to be masters of your faith, but fellow workers with you for your joy.

Is 54:11-14

**20 Fri** The Lord says to his people: You will be founded in justice and free from oppression: fear shall no longer have any hold over you.

Mt 9:10-13

**21 Sat** St MATTHEW Jesus said: I desire mercy, not sacrifice. Indeed, I have not come to call the just, but sinners.

Is 55:6-11

**22 SUN** Turn to God who will forgive freely. For, thus says the Lord, my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways.

Lk 17:20-21

**23 Mon** Jesus said: The coming of the kingdom of God cannot be observed, for the kingdom of God is among you.

Jr 14:8-9

**24 Tue** You are our hope, O God. You are among us and we are called by your name.

Jn 14:21-26

**25 Wed** Jesus said: The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.

Jr 29:11-14

**26 Thu** The plans I have for you, says the Lord, are plans for peace, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

Rm 8:31-39

**27 Fri** Who could condemn us? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God, interceding for us.

Mt 5:14-16

**28 Sat** Jesus said: You are the light of the world. Let your light shine in people's sight, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Ph 2:1-11

**29 SUN** Paul writes: Be one in love, one in heart and one in mind; do nothing out of jealousy or vanity.

Ws 11:21-26

**30 Mon** You are merciful to all, Lord, because you are almighty. You overlook people's sins so that they can repent. Yes, you love everything that exists.

Johannine hours are meant as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer in the midst of our daily life. During the course of a day, take an hour or so to read the Bible passage with the short commentary and to reflect on the questions which follow. Afterwards, a group of 3 to 10 people can meet to share what they have discovered and perhaps for a time of prayer.

**J**esus came so that people might have "life to the full"; he came to save "those who were lost." He did not wish to repress human life, therefore, but to liberate it from all that could hamper it.

People who think only about saving themselves live under the threat of failure. Making their fears the motivation of their acts, they live on the defensive, attempting to protect themselves, refusing to look for something new. In the end, other people become for them rivals or threats.

Whoever gives their life is free of constantly having to calculate: What will I get out of it? What will I lose? If they consent to "lose," in their own eyes as well as in the eyes of others, that is because the free gift of themselves is already vital for them and is more meaningful than anything else. Rather than seeking to convince others, to control or to seduce, they can serve others, care for them, support them. In this way they create trust. Their freedom blossoms in a communion without limits; their existence can open to eternal life.

There is a sequence in giving. If I am alive, if I am able to love life, that is because others have loved me and looked forward to welcoming me. And if I want others to have a beautiful life, it is because I know that life is worth living. Since I have received my life from another, I can give it in my turn.

Jesus is the perfect witness to the truth that life takes on its full meaning when it is given. Because, as Son of God, he lived to the very end a life rooted in the Father's love, he was able to give his own life, his body and his blood, out of love for human beings. In his eyes, we matter more than his own existence. His gift becomes for us a source that enables us to give ourselves. By relying on him, we have, beyond our failings and our fears, the assurance that we too can live lives of love.

- How can I invite others to marvel at what I love most in life?
- What reminds me of the value that God places on human beings, on creation, on life?

# MEDITATING ON THE WORD

## OCTOBER

These short readings proposed for reflection are taken from the midday prayer in Taizé. The reference shows where the text was taken from. Sometimes a longer reading is given, for those who wish to set the text in its context.

# JOHANNINE HOURS

ACTS 3,1-10

1 **Tue** The Lord says: I did not tell my people to search for me in chaos. I am the Lord God, who proclaims justice, who speaks what is true.

*Is 45:18-19*

2 **Wed** Jesus said: Peace I leave you; my peace I give you. I do not give it to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.

*Jn 14:22-26*

3 **Thu** Jesus said: I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for having revealed to little children what you have hidden from the learned and clever.

*Mt 11:25-27*

4 **Fri** Do not repay evil with evil. Seek to do what is regarded as good by all. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

*Rm 12:14-18,21*

5 **Sat** Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Put out into deep water and let down your nets for a catch." "Master," Simon replied, "we have worked hard all night long without catching anything, but because you say so I will let down the nets."

*Lk 5:1-11*

6 **SUN** Do not let anything worry you, but in every situation, by prayer with thanksgiving, let God know your desires.

*Ph 4:4-7*

7 **Mon** I run in the path of your will, O God, for you have set my heart free.

*Ps 119:25-32*

8 **Tue** Thus says God who created you: Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name, you are mine.

*Is 43:1-4a*

9 **Wed** Jesus said to Martha: You are worried and upset about many things, and yet few are needed, indeed only one.

*Lk 10:38-42*

10 **Thu** May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, and may you be rooted and established in love, so that knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

*Ep 3:14-19*

11 **Fri** Jesus said: If anyone wants to follow me, let them renounce themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

*Mt 16:24-26*

12 **Sat** Jesus said: The kingdom of heaven is like the yeast a woman took and mixed in with a large amount of flour until the whole thing rose.

*Mt 13:31-33*

13 **SUN** You guide me, Lord, on paths of righteousness. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for you are with me.

*Ps 23*

14 **Mon** With all my heart I seek you, O God. I treasure your promises in my heart so as not to sin against you.

*Ps 119:1-16*

15 **Tue** Joyfully you will draw water from the springs of salvation, and you will say, "Praise God and call on his name. Proclaim his deeds to the nations!"

*Is 12:2-6*

16 **Wed** Jesus said: Whoever makes themselves humble like a child is greatest in the kingdom of Heaven. Anyone who welcomes a little child in my name welcomes me.

*Mt 18:1-5*

17 **Thu** Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one Body and one Spirit, just as you have all been called to one hope.

*Ep 4:1-6*

18 **Fri** St LUKE Jesus said to his disciples: Whenever you go into a town where they make you welcome, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there and say, "The kingdom of God is very near you."

*Lk 10:1-9*

19 **Sat** God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

*1 Jn 4:16-21*

20 **SUN** Sing a new song to the Lord! Praise his name! Proclaim God's salvation, day by day. Tell the nations of his glory!

*Ps 96*

21 **Mon** Peter said: I now really understand that God has no favourites, but that in every nation he loves those who revere him and act justly.

*Ac 10:1-35*

22 **Tue** Let us not love just with words and in speech, but with actions and in truth.

*1 Jn 3:14-20*

1 **Wed** Watch over those who are entrusted to you, not simply as a duty but willingly and with gladness of heart, according to God's will.

*1 P 5:1-4*

Johannine hours are meant as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer in the midst of our daily life. During the course of a day, take an hour or so to read the Bible passage with the short commentary and to reflect on the questions which follow. Afterwards, a group of 3 to 10 people can meet to share what they have discovered and perhaps for time of prayer.

2 **Thu** Jesus said: This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you.

*Jn 15:9-13*

3 **Fri** Happy are they who are not in anguish over their failings and who do not founder in despair. For if they are hard upon themselves, to whom will they be kind?

*Si 14:1-6,14-16*

4 **Sat** The Risen Christ said to the disciples: Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.

*Jn 20:19-23a*

5 **SUN** Jesus said: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is similar: Love your neighbour as yourself.

*Mt 22:34-40*

6 **Mon** Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and in fullness of faith. Let us hold to the hope we profess, without wavering, for the one who has promised is faithful.

*Heb 10:19-25*

7 **Tue** God said to Ezekiel: Son of man, listen carefully to all my words and take them to heart, then go to your countrymen and speak to them.

*Ezr 3:10-11*

8 **Wed** Paul said: Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, who said, "There is more happiness in giving than in receiving."

*Ac 20:17-38*

9 **Thu** Jesus said: Do not be anxious about your life. Can any of you, by worrying about it, add a single moment to the length of your life? If such a small thing is beyond your power, why worry about the rest?

*Lk 12:22-31*

I have no gold or silver, but what I have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ, walk! (Acts 3,6)

Peter did not run away from confronting the suffering of the man crippled from birth. He did not look for the "causes." He let himself be touched by the drama of that resigned person, who had only his handicap to awaken the pity of passersby and to get from them enough to survive. In the eyes of all, that man presented the face of a fallen and absurd humanity who seemed to doom God's plan to failure.

Peter had no explanation for the mystery of that situation. But he could witness to and share what he himself had discovered: trust in Christ is stronger than anything else. Fears, acts of cowardice, and despair cannot destroy it. From the "Come, follow me!" that Peter heard by the lake until the "Do you love me?" after the resurrection, Jesus had always shown him that trust is possible, because he himself was the first to run the risk.

"In the name of Jesus Christ..." Now Peter is filled with the Spirit of Christ and acts in his name. He proclaims both his communion with Christ and his hope for the handicapped man. Peter can expect for someone who no longer expects anything. He can believe in the future of the one who was trapped in failure or suffering. The beggar was looking for something that would just enable him to survive. Peter dared to offer him a sharing in the secret of his life, so that God's glory would be manifested in him.

Living out Christ's call means discovering in it a treasure that will never be lacking and with which we can respond to the expectations that we encounter. Sharing that call means living Christ for others.

- How am I already living out Christ's call?
- How can I dare to share that call with others?



# Listening to the Continents

## Indonesia

Pujilah semua bangsa  
Laudate omnes gentes

Young people who prepared a meeting in Indonesia tell of their experience:

Saturday evening. One thousand persons are together in the parish church of Jedi, on the island of Java, in Indonesia. There could have been more, but it is the rainy season, and it rained this evening! They have come from Jakarta, Bandung, Sukabumi, Medium, Surabaya...all the way to Wedi, a village 25 km from Jogjakarta. Most are young, but a few adults are here too. They come from different denominations; some are youth workers, religious, seminarians. All hold a candle in their hands and this evening's prayer is in expectation of the resurrection.

At the beginning of the year, several young people from Jogjakarta came to the village and proposed such a meeting. The people of the village reflected, said yes, and began to prepare it, inspired by another meeting that was held previously in Bandung. They wanted everything to be prepared down to the smallest details: will the guests like the food? How will we get to church for the prayers? Some live far from the centre, so in addition to the few cars available, a large number of bicycles were put at the disposal of the participants.

On the eve of the meeting, there was still one big problem to solve: how to pay the bills? A firm offered to help. It was quite generous, but we preferred to find a way by ourselves. And finally, thanks to the efforts of all, there was enough money!

We set up seven large tents beside the church for the meals and the meetings. The first prayer on Friday evening

touched people deeply: for almost all of them, it was the first time they came up to the cross to pray in that way. The singing continued until late at night.

All set out with new enthusiasm to take up their commitments at home. The theology students of Jogjakarta asked their dean to hold a similar meeting in their seminary. Elsewhere, regular prayers are continuing, or more informal meetings. But for all, that meeting at Wedi strengthened the desire to "discover a communion of love with Christ."

## Italy

### At the Heart of the Local Church

"There are many spiritual gifts, but it is the same Spirit" (1 Cor 12,4). The prayer held the first Friday of each month in the cathedral of Turin is a point of reference for the "pilgrimage of trust on earth." For several years now, more than a thousand young people from the region have attended. This May, the monthly prayer had a special character. Over 200 people from other towns in Italy came to the prayer and remained for three days, staying with families in eighteen parishes of the city.

During the Friday evening prayer, in the presence of Cardinal Giovanni Saldarini, the archbishop of Turin, and two brothers of Taizé, more than 1500 young people were welcomed by these words:

"This evening's prayer is a stage in a journey begun some fifteen years ago by a few young people who, upon their return from Taizé, wanted to share their experience by proposing a time of prayer in the city. Since then, without interruption, every first Friday of the month, the prayer has grown while still keeping the simplicity of its beginnings, with singing and silence. Each month, it is introduced by a brief talk given by someone who is trying to open up ways of reconciliation in Turin. This evening, as we also welcome people from other towns, we remember the call with which everything began: to welcome, in silence and prayer, by listening to the Word of God and praying around the cross of the Risen Christ, the pilgrim who stops and then continues his or her journey as a reconciled person, with a trusting heart."

Cardinal Saldarini, reflecting on the First Letter to the Corinthians, encouraged the participants to find new enthusiasm for their mission. That enthusiasm is brought to birth by the awareness that we are members of Christ in his Church, with respect for the different gifts of each person.

Saturday morning, participants prayed in the parishes that welcomed them and then visited some of the signs of hope

that silently nourish our city. It was an important moment for the inhabitants of Turin as well, since they were able to discover close at hand true parables of the Gospel. For example a girl from Genoa, after having visited a place where the homeless are welcomed, could not hide her astonishment at the sisters who accomplish so much good in such a hidden way.

Saturday afternoon began with a time of reflection, listening to witnesses to the Church on the move in our city. Many were touched, for instance, by the words of a Dominican sister of Bethany who works with prisoners. "What matters for God," she said, "is not what we were until yesterday, but our heart today and our desire to love him."

Following this meeting, everyone set out to visit different groups in the city. "After a brief but intense meeting with the cloistered community of Saint Joseph," recounted Vito from Bari, "we went to Cottolengo. I was impressed to see people trying to be close to the poorest of the poor, with simplicity and love. Back home we are helping to build a home for the elderly in Albania, and so it was encouraging to see the generosity of the people of Turin."

Close to a thousand people then gathered at Turin's shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Consolation for evening prayer, a time of joy and a recalling of the resurrection.

After Sunday morning Mass in the parishes and a meal in the families, everyone gathered in the afternoon for a multicultural festival. Groups of Africans and Latin Americans living in Italy shared their gifts of music and dance, before everyone left for their homes.

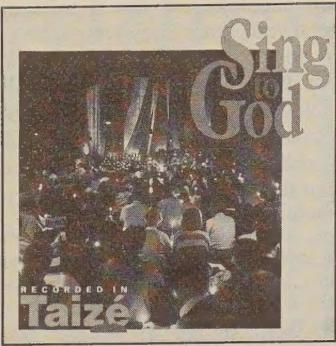
This short meeting allowed many people of the city to set out on the road toward one another. To remain together, it was proposed that we begin a pilgrimage with the icon of the cross around which our monthly prayer takes place. This icon will go first to the parishes that welcomed participants in the weekend, then from one community to another, for new times of prayer and meeting.

## Ireland

### Let Peace Begin With Me!

Some forty young people took part in an afternoon gathering held in Dunmore East. It was a time of prayer and sharing on the topic: "Let peace begin with me!" A bit later in the evening, two thousand young people came for a prayer celebration, among them a group of students from Northern Ireland and a group that works for peace and justice.

The not-so-young people who took part in the meeting were impressed and stimulated by the enthusiasm of the young. This enthusiasm is not dead. We are continuing to pray together and to listen to one another. In this way we are becoming closer and deepening our communion. Others are constantly joining us. They are introduced to the beauty of the prayer that they discover and it is a support for those who are already involved. We are astonished witnesses to this seed that is growing.



## Cassettes and CDs from Taizé

For some, the publication of **Sing to God** at the beginning of this year provoked a certain amount of frustration. They knew very well that the recording was available but it seemed that it was nowhere to be found! At the same time, other people were experiencing what could only be described as bewilderment. Was this really the new CD from Taizé? Or was it by somebody else? Does it genuinely reflect the way the songs are sung during prayer in Taizé? Given temporary distribution problems in one or two countries, as well as the variety of cassettes and CD's "featuring songs from Taizé" which are presently on the market, it is not surprising that questions like these have been making themselves heard over recent months. Here then, to give precise details and to

dispel any confusion, is a complete list of the recordings made by Taizé and which are currently available, and where they can be found.

Recorded in Amsterdam, Breda and Lausanne and produced in 1978, **Cantons et Litanies** (MC = TZ 404) is the earliest of the Taizé recordings available. The songs include Benedictus, Misericordias Domini, Ostende Nobis. Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris, and Taizé were the settings, in 1980, for **Cantate** (MC = TZ 405, CD = T 505), and **Alleluia** (MC = TZ 453, CD = T 533) was recorded live in Saint Paul's Cathedral during the 1986 European Meeting in London. Among the songs in **Resurrexit** (MC = TZ 408, CD = T 508), recorded in 1991, are Christus Resurrexit, O Lord, hear my prayer and Bleibet hier.

In 1991, **Jubilate** (MC = TZ 454, CD = T 554) was the first recording to be made entirely in Taizé, in the Church of Reconciliation. The pieces include: Il n'est pas de plus grand amour, Stay with us, O Lord Jesus Christ, Adoramus te Christe. It was followed in 1993 by **Veni Sancte Spiritus** (MC = TZ 455, CD = T 555), containing well known pieces like Jubilate coeli, Crucem tuam, Toi, tu nous aimes.

**Sing to God** (MC = TZ 456, CD = T 556) "Recorded at Taizé in August 1995, this recording is the first where all solos and nearly all refrains are entirely in English. 18 pieces including some less familiar ones such as the exhilarating Let us sing to the Lord. An excellent recording both for those who know the music well and those who don't." (Decani Music,

February 1996.) Including: Sing to God God can only give faithful love, Bless the Lord.

These recordings are to be found in record shops and religious bookshops. They can also be ordered directly from:

### Australia and New Zealand:

Rainbow Book Agencies, 303 Arthur Street Road, Fairfield, Vic. 3078.

tel: 03 9481 6611. fax: 03 9481 2371.

### Canada and USA:

GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Avenue, Chicago, Ill. 60638.

tel: toll-free order line: 1-800-442-1358.

tel: international and local: (708) 496-3800.

fax: (708) 496 3828.

### Ireland and UK:

Harmonia Mundi / Auvidis, 19-21 Nile Street, London N1 7LL.

tel: (0171) 263 0863. fax: 0171 253 3237.

and

Redemptorist Publications, Alphonsus House, Chawton, Alton GU34 3HQ.

tel: (0420) 882 22. fax: (0420) 888 05.

During October and November, two Taizé brothers will be in North America for prayers, visits and meetings.

Oct 20 Mendham NJ

(Sr. Barbara Jean 201-543-4641)

Oct 22 St Francis Xavier Church, Manhattan

Oct 30-Nov 1 Alvernia College, Reading PA (Bob Shearn 610-775-3226)

Nov 6-10 South Carolina (Dorothy Jeffcoat 803-754-2879)

Nov 16 Day for students at Fordham Univ. NY (Judith Bruder 212-636-6269)

Dec 2-6 Workshop sponsored by Trinity Church NY (212-602-0755)

For additional information contact Taizé, France or call Taizé NY 212-246-0029 after Oct 1st.

**J**esus our peace, even when we do not know how to pray, we recall your words: "I will send you the Holy Spirit, who will be a support and a comfort, who will be with you for ever." And so, enable us to cast into the crucible of prayer all that worries us and keeps us far from your Spirit.

*Prayer by Brother Roger, Pentecost 1996*

## Letter from Taizé

Ordinary subscription: 40 FF (France 30 FF)

Supporting subscription: 75 or 150 FF

Airmail subscription (outside Europe only): 50 FF (Annual subscription)

means of payment:

- by credit card (*Visa, Mastercard, Eurocard, Carte Bleue*): send the number of your card and dates of validity to Taizé, and say what sum in French Francs you wish to transfer.
- by international *Giro transfer* in French Francs addressed to: *Lettre de Taizé*, CCP 20041-01007-0061446M038-71 or CCP LYON 614 46 M.
- by cheque in French Francs to *Lettre de Taizé*, F-71250 Taizé Communauté made payable through *Société Générale* (Eurochèques in French Francs accepted).
- In the following countries it is possible to pay the subscription *within the country*: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, UK and USA. Write to Taizé to ask for the address in your country.

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